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## **Comprehensive Literature Review of Work-life Balance in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract:**

This study seeks to explore the existing research on the ongoing issue of work-life balance in Pakistan. For this purpose, the current research leverages literature on work-life balance factors. A comprehensive literature analysis indicated that "job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress, employee behavior, job engagement, organizational support, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, job burnout, and job performance" are the most prominent factors, while "education, banking, and healthcare" sectors have been studied the most. In addition, the social exchange theory was shown to be the most prevalent explanation for the phenomena. Further, future studies could focus on industrial based studies, methodological based studies, empirical studies, and methodological studies. In Pakistan, future research might be conducted in the "retail, manufacturing, hotels, and telecom" industries as these industries were not explored in the past. The partial least square approach might significantly complement the new research from a methodological standpoint as this is the most useful technique to analyze the empirical data. Alternative theories such as "knowledge-based theory, resource-based theory, and dynamic capacity theory" might be empirically coupled to produce a feasible research concern as these theories have ability to enhance the employee's capacity to better manage their jobs.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee behaviour, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, social change theory

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## INTRODUCTION

The simplest way of explaining work-life balance is the proportion of time spent working to time spent not working is called work-life balance. As the time is changing and inflation across world is increasing at a very fast pace, majority of public is dealing with extra workload to meet the ends. Previously it was easily manageable if one person in a family does formal work, and their partners were looking after other matters like household things. However, currently everyone in the family is working but still not be able to meet their daily means hence trying to take extra workload which started raising work-life balance issues. This concept has started getting attention from academic scholars and public debate. The most common way of finding work-life balance can be identified in a way how it can be done and, in which way it can be achieved without disturbing the other matters, and also from its possible consequences (good or bad), along with the related policies necessary for work-life balance implementations. Work-life balance is comprised of two important aspects: 1) life and 2) work. In the previous literature most of the time researchers focused on life aspect but mostly researchers did not focus life aspect of this concept. However, present study will try to fill this gap by covering both aspects of work and life. The traditional definition of "life" was based on caring for dependent children, suggesting that work-life balance is predominantly challenging for working parents (Chaudhuri et al. 2020; Janasz et al. 2013). While the work side was considered as full-time formal job with a specific employer.

In many developing nations, including Pakistan, work-life balance is considered a matter of concern as many employees in Pakistan are working extra hours, but their organizations are not paying for those extra hours (Aman-Ullah et al. 2022). As a result, they are facing problems in matters of their families and personal life. In line, Saima and Zohair (2016) concluded their study that healthcare employees face difficulty maintaining their work-life balance since they are required to spend extra hours looking after their patients, causing dissatisfaction and burnout among these employees. Research scholars like Masood (2018) added that 60% of medical graduates do not start their medical career as they find it difficult to cope with extra-long working hours. In the case of female graduates, families are also restricting them from pursuing their jobs due to long work hours and lack of time for families (Alvi 2018). Many researchers found that work-life balance is an essential aspect of employees' behavior, making it a significant concern for organizations (Aman-Ullah et al. 2020a, 2020b, 2021; Aman-Ullah et al. 2021). Furthermore, Maurya et al. (2021) added that countries that integrate work-life balance in their employment practices positively affect their organizations and society, whereas perceiving less apparent conflicts between work and life (Le et al. 2020). Therefore, it is believed that when workers discover a company that is a good match for them, they prefer to stay there for extended time period.

Several scholars have already contributed to the work-life balance literature and sought to address the continuing issue of employees' work-life balance through multiple studies and provided recommendations over the last decade. Nevertheless, after a thorough review of the literature, it has been found that a literature review study on work-life balance is needed in Pakistan, which will provide a route to overcome the issues due to poor work-life balance. The present study attempts to analyze all available literature on work-life balance in the Pakistani context to determine what has already been done and what suggestions may be made next. For this purpose, data was taken from google scholars, and other accessible internet sources. Also, this research will assist in

identifying the sector with many predictors across different sectors that ignited a need for additional investigations since the influence of insufficient work-life balance is so broad that practically any organization, whether public or private, is impacted.

### **RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature covered in this part comprises multiple Pakistani research studies across various industries identifying the most relevant work-life balance aspects. In line, seven sectors, namely the "education sector, banking sector, healthcare sector, working women, commercial pilots, the private sector, others (non-governmental organizations, and the public sector)", were analyzed to highlight the causes of poor work-life balance.

#### **Education Sector**

Arif and Ilyas (2013) investigated the link between work-life balance and its influence on the lives and attitudes of instructors at private universities across Pakistan. They discovered that different aspects of the quality of work-life, such as "perceived value of work, work atmosphere, work-life balance, and life satisfaction," were the primary determinants of work-life balance. Further, these factors influence work attitudes and employees' overall perceptions of work-life quality. Another study was conducted by Arif and Farooqi (2014) on the influence of work-life balance on organizational commitment and job satisfaction among teaching staff at the university of Gujrat. They discovered that the employee's work-life balance substantially influenced their commitment and job satisfaction. Saeed and Farooqi (2014) in their investigated-on university professors, found that work-life balance significantly affects their job satisfaction and that a nominal relationship exists between work stress and work-life balance. Soomro et al. (2018) further explored the association between "work-life balance, work-family conflict, job satisfaction conflict, and perceived employee performance". They found in their study that both work-life balance and work-family conflicts strongly influence employee performance. They also confirmed that job satisfaction significantly moderates the relationship of "work-life balance and work-family conflicts with employee's performance".

Further, Humayon et al. (2018) researched the influence of work-life balance among university staff. They discovered in their study that "supervision and working circumstances" significantly influence employees' work-life balance. They further found that university policy did not affect work-life balance. Witnessing Karachi's public universities, Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui (2019) investigated the link between "flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and job satisfaction". They observed a substantial correlation between flexible arrangements and work-life balance. Moreover, it was shown that job satisfaction is a potent mediator between flexible work arrangements and work-life balance. Naseem et al. (2020) investigated how variables connected to the work and family domains influence the work-life balance of female academic staff. Work-life balancing experiences, family and staff life issues, and social support were shown to be adversely connected to work-life balance. Seema et al. (2020) carried out a study to investigate the connection between "work-life attributes, work-life balance, and career satisfaction" following the views of schoolteachers. They discovered that the leadership and academics successfully established work-life initiatives to increase the retention of existing workers and recruit prospective quality personnel. Shaikh and Wajidi (2021) researched the impact of "workplace

stress and employee behavior on the work-life balance” of academic staff in Pakistani universities. They discovered that management might assist employees and maintain them as critical organizational assets by devising effective tactics. Mulyani et al. (2021) performed a study to see if an improved working environment and behaviors of schoolteachers of work-life balance can also reduce their job burnout. They discovered that emotional control minimizes the effect of working situations on children's conduct. Rashid et al. (2022) further analyzed the influence of "work-life balance, workload, and supervisory support" on the job performance of Pakistani schoolteachers. They also tested mediating effect of job stress on the relationship. They discovered that work-life balance and supervisory assistance positively affect teachers' job performance. This further confirmed the mediation effect of job stress between the relationship.

### **Banking Sector**

Javed et al. (2014) researched the influence of role conflict, job stress, and work-related challenges on the intention to leave the organization. They discovered that role conflict and job stress had a substantially positive link with turnover intention, but they failed to identify the relationship between “work-life balance and turnover intentions.” Alvi et al. (2014) conducted a study examining the connection between “work-life balance and employee job engagement” among banking employees. They discovered that work-life balance is significantly associated with job satisfaction. Similarly, Amin and Malik (2017) researched the association between employee performance and work-life balance among bank managers. They found in their study that work-life balance incentives can help organization increase employee performance. Alvi (2018) investigated the influence of “work-life balance on job stress, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction” among bank workers. She discovered a negative correlation between bank workers' work-life balance and workplace stress. Further findings demonstrated a favorable correlation between "work-life balance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction".

Haider et al. (2018) researched how and why work-life balance influences employee job performance and how satisfaction with colleagues depends on it through boosting employee psychological well-being. They discovered that "psychological well-being and satisfaction" with colleagues are crucial for expanding researchers' knowledge of how and why work-life balance is most likely to boost employee job performance. Atif and Zubairi (2020) researched the association between work-life balance and job satisfaction and women's mental health. They discovered a possible relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, sadness, and anxiety. Zahoor et al. (2021) researched the impact of "high-performance work practices, work-family conflict, job stress, and personality on the work-life balance" of bank workers. They discovered that medium family-work conflict is beneficial to work-life balance. They also found that personality type and job stress have a significant influence on work-life balance. While behavioral patterns are not intrinsically detrimental to work-life balance. Habib and Jaleel (2022) researched how their performance is affected by “decision-making power, schedule flexibility, and working environment”. They observed that “schedule flexibility, workplace environment, and decision-making power” had a favorable and substantial effect on the performance of female workers in financial institutions.

## Healthcare Sector

Shadab and Arif (2015) researched the influence of work-life balance on the job satisfaction of a person's personal and social life. They discovered that around fifty percent of individuals are dissatisfied with their jobs, preventing them from achieving a healthy work-life balance. They want to decrease their working hours to achieve a work-life balance. Khalid and Rathore (2018) investigated the potential relevance of work-life balance as a moderating factor for Pakistani public hospital physicians. They assess the impact of characteristics like "supervisor support, organizational support, and job value on the work-life balance" of public hospital post-graduate trainees. The job-related parameters were positively correlated with work-life balance, while control factors such as "number of children and marital status" did not affect the relationship. Malik et al. (2019) studied the association between "perceived emotional intelligence and work-life balance and job satisfaction" among healthcare workers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. They discovered a strong correlation between "emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and job satisfaction". Through emotional intelligence, healthcare workers manage their work-life balance better and gain more job satisfaction. In Pakistan, pharmacists had superior social skills and were more motivated, but doctors were better at balancing work and life. Shahzadi (2021) investigated the effect of work-life balance, "time inflexibility, supporting family, and working conditions" on employee performance with psychological health as a mediator. They discovered that work-life balance is favorably related to employee performance and that psychological health partly explains this association. Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) examined the effect of "work-life balance on turnover intentions and employee retention" among Pakistani physicians. In addition, the study intended to investigate the mediating effect of work satisfaction on these relations. They discovered that a healthy work-life balance is an important predictor of employee retention and desire to leave. In addition, job satisfaction strongly mediated the association between work-life balance and employee retention, as well as the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intentions.

## Service Sector

Malik et al. (2020) investigated the situation of work-life balance among Pakistani commercial pilots. This study investigated the connection between "family-work and work-family conflicts and job satisfaction". They discovered that family-work conflict leads to greater job satisfaction, whereas work-family conflict results in a lower level of job satisfaction. Malik et al. (2020) found that the work-life balance of Pakistani commercial pilots differs depending on their marital status. They discovered that it might be advantageous for both workers and companies. If the Pakistani civil aviation authority ensures that the CAP-371 policy, which supports a 12-hour work limit, is implemented rather than its status remaining pending, wives and children will be able to connect with the pilot on an emotional level as opposed to viewing him as a money-making machine. Single workers will anticipate marriage in order to dedicate more time to their parents and future family.

Noorani and Shakir (2021) "conducted a study to determine the effect of culture on Pakistani women's ability to achieve a work-life balance. They discovered that culture is essential in defining women's lives in Pakistan, influencing their capacity to attain work-life balance. The caste system was also a significant predictor of work-life balance within Pakistani culture. Kibriya and Kousr (2021) researched diverse perspectives on the notion of work-life balance and the coping methods working women in Pakistan use to preserve this balance. They discovered that firms should

establish HR policies and procedures that help working women by offering childcare facilities and flexible work hours. Khurshid et al. (2022) researched the connection between the work environment and societal concerns that inhibit women's progression to senior management positions. They discovered that organizational norms for female workers help them balance work and family, leading to a less stressful workplace. The importance of the social aspect as a mediator in establishing a healthy work environment in firms is also believed. In addition, it was found that further work is required on promotional rules and gender-blind laws so that women's professional progression is not confined to middle management.

### **Non-profit Organizations**

Shaikh et al. (2019) researched to evaluate the variables that influence the work-life balance of women of NGOs in Sindh, Pakistan. Similarly, Bano et al. (2020) researched the correlation between the location of control, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. By focusing on the control location, the present study will offer policymakers crucial information for managing “work-life balance and job satisfaction” as determined by the researchers. Hasan et al. (2021) performed research to test the relationship between work-life balance, person-job fit, and job satisfaction with organizational commitment. The researchers discovered that work-life balance, person-job fit, and job satisfaction positively affect organizational commitment. Riaz et al. (2021) investigated the influence of employee engagement factors on job performance and the moderating effect of work-life balance. They discovered that cognitive and behavioral engagement had little impact on job performance; however, behavioral engagement has a beneficial effect on the relationship. Further, work-life balance shows a significant mediating influence on employee engagement and job performance.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the above discussion, we have presented an overview of the study on work-life balance in Pakistan in this section. Next, we reviewed the empirical research trends, the general research interest in the domain, organizational types where work-life policies, balancing policy types, and the outcomes that are impacted by work-life policies.

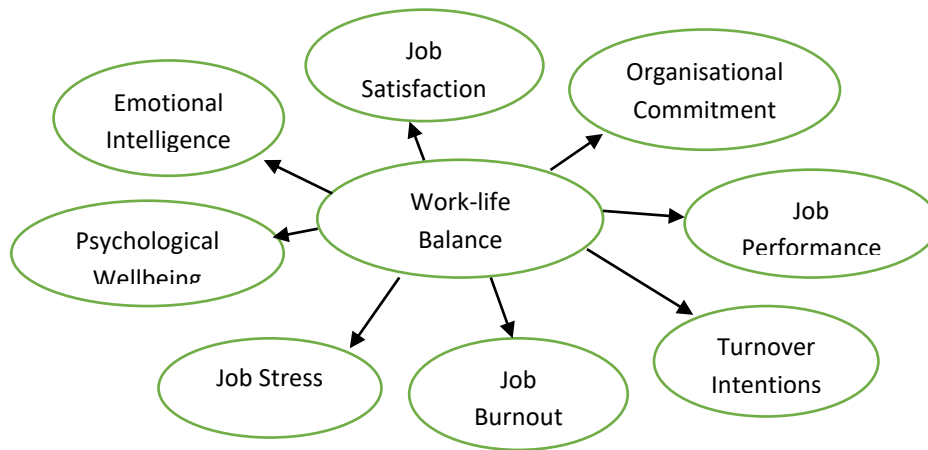
#### **Work-life Research Intensity**

With the changing demographics of Pakistani families, within which we are seeing an increase in nuclear families and the disappearance of extended families (Khalid & Razem, 2022), it is not unexpected that work-life balance research in Pakistan has gained momentum in recent years. In contrast to the late 2000s, when only one or two empirical studies were published yearly, the work-life research began to gather pace in 2010–2011, when more than four or five studies were released in a single calendar year. Due to the loss of social support from extended family, the growing number of dual-income couples in the Pakistani economy, the rising popularity of knowledge work, and the expansion of the service sector, we can confidently expect that work-life research will increase. Moreover, an increased divorce rate results in single-parent families, necessitating improved organizational work-life policies and regulations (Sheykhi, 2020).

#### **Research Trends**

Since 2013, most of the studies on work-life balance have increased, and the predominant study paradigm is positivist. Among the 37 chosen papers, 31 employ quantitative research methods, 3

use qualitative research methods, and 3 use a hybrid technique, including qualitative and quantitative research procedures. As an independent variable, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress, employee behavior, job engagement, administrative support, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, job burnout, and job performance. While job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job stress were used as mediating variables in most of the studies. The primary organizational outcomes highlighted were “job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions”. All these factors are shown in below figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Factors affecting work-life balance.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Achieving work-life balance is the most critical factor in attaining favorable organizational results, such as increased life and job satisfaction for workers (Alvi, 2018). This study aims to give a complete overview of work-life balance research undertaken in Pakistan and its influence on organizational results. The results enhanced our comprehension of the nature of the business where work-life research is more widespread and the organizational elements that fostered work-life balance efforts. Work-life balance is rapidly becoming a desire for many Pakistani professionals since there is no clear separation between work and family or family and work. Yet, organizations must continue improving their work-life policies to increase employee retention rates. Moreover, it is evident from our study that, in light of the favorable correlation between work-life balance policies and organizational results, Pakistani organizations are making several efforts to improve workers' work and family lives in all sectors.

Leaders of organizations continue to invest in developing work-life balance practices by providing a supportive work environment and family-friendly practices (Kavya & Kramer, 2020). In this research, a collection of work-life balance rules applicable in a variety of circumstances underscores the necessity for organizations to prioritize the family aspect of employee development. In addition, it contributes to the existing body of scientific literature on work-life balance, which emphasizes assisting workers in fostering a constructive balance between work and family (Chaudhuri et al. 2020). This also requires training for supervisors and senior managers to prepare their staff to properly handle work-family challenges without seeing work and family as

incompatible spheres. In addition, our results imply that organizations should be proactive in assessing their workers' work-life balance practices and requirements in tailoring work-life balance practices to the industrial/sectoral context. Additionally, our study's findings may have theoretical consequences.

Theoretically, our findings support the existing theories and frameworks on work-life balance, such as the social exchange theory and the perceived organizational support theory, which contextualize the substantial role of organizational facilitation and assistance in generating positive attitudes amongst employees for achieving high results for the organization through a sense of responsibility for additional effort in connection to support initiatives. Although this study has significant ramifications, it is limited because it is only a review of the available literature. Yet, it offers a variety of opportunities for future researchers, such as cross-sectional empirical studies investigating the influence of different work-life balance programs on organizational results. In addition, we urge researchers and academics to perform cross-cultural studies, sectoral analyses, and industry-wide comparisons to comprehend the elements contributing to the effectiveness of work-life balance policies in different settings.

**Future Research Questions:** How has the paradigm of work-life balance altered over time? What examples can be found that demonstrate the usefulness of decreasing work-family conflicts? What are the potential work-life conflicts, and how may they be mitigated? What is a cross-cultural review of work-life balance in emerging regions, and how does it vary from developed countries? What similarities and differences may develop in organisational action in reducing work-family conflicts? Possible integration of similarities between developing and developed nations. What are the positive spillover effects that increase work-life balance? How do management strategies for addressing work-life issues vary across developed and developing countries? How can work-life balance be framed in the context of the public sector?

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